Avoiding job scams

Whilst you are looking for jobs, you may find some jobs which are not genuine. Their purpose is to take advantage of you as a jobseeker, usually financially. These are often called ‘scams’ or sometimes called ‘phishing’ if they are attempting to obtain your personal / financial data for fraudulent purposes. Scammers advertise jobs where legitimate employers do.

The Careers & Employability Service reviews each job advertisement it places in an effort to ensure jobs are genuine and lawful. However, you may come across jobs in your search on the internet that are not genuine and seek to take advantage.

Here are some tips to help you tell whether a job may be a scam.

- Make sure you ask questions about the job if you are unsure and try to get everything in writing.
- Do not assume that just because an employer has an impressive website or produces a glossy brochure that it must be a genuine or professionally run organisation.
- Be wary if the company asks you to ring a premium rate number. Examples of higher rate dialling codes are 0844, 0870, 0871, 0845, 09. Also be wary if the company only gives you a 07xxx number, which is either a mobile or can be delivered anywhere in the world.
- Be wary if their email address is not a company one, but a free email account like Hotmail or Yahoo. Be suspicious if the email contains spelling mistakes or poor English.
- Be cautious if you get the job without an interview or they email you back quickly - offering you the job. A legitimate company will spend days or weeks going through applications.
- Find out if a student / graduate has worked for the organisation recently.
- Be wary if the company doesn't have a website or if on their website, you can't find an address for their company, a VAT number or Company Registration number.
- Do not spend any money before you start your job unless you understand exactly what you are getting.
- Be suspicious if directed to different numbers, websites or a different company name than the one in the advert you responded to. This may be done to hide a bad reputation or scam.
- Do not be pressurised to sign up to anything you do not fully understand.
- When you first apply do not provide bank or financial information, passport or similar identification. These might be required later but only when you get the job.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If in doubt

- Do not apply for the job.
- Do not agree to sign anything.
- Do not pay for any services on offer.
- Do not return any contact with the organisation.
- Ask the Careers & Employability Service for advice.

If you believe that you have been a victim of an employment scam

- Report it. Only if these scams are reported can the Police and the Government Office of Fair Trading take action. You can get advice on your chances of recovering any money that you might have paid.
- Keep copies of all correspondence about the job; names, dates and everything you can remember.
- If the vacancy was inadvertently advertised through the Careers & Employability Service or on campus, please tell us immediately by ringing 0151 794 4647 so we can withdraw the advert.

Careers & Employability Service

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